



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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Robert M. Summers, Ph.D.
Deputy Secretary

February 24, 2010

The Honorable Maggie L. McIntosh, Chairman
Environmental Matters Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Re: Letter of Support, House Bill 685 – Environment – Fluorescent and Compact Fluorescent
Light Recycling – County Plans

Dear Chairman McIntosh:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Land Management Administration has reviewed House Bill 685, entitled *Environment – Fluorescent and Compact Fluorescent Light Recycling – County Plans*, and we would like to offer our support for the bill.

This proposed legislation would require each county to address the strategy for the collection and recycling of fluorescent and compact fluorescent lights that contain mercury in the county recycling plan required in §9-1703 of the Environment Article. Each county would be required to update its recycling plan with this information and submit it to the Department by October 1, 2011.

Waste diversion and recycling saves energy, reduces greenhouse gasses and other pollutants generated in the manufacturing process and at landfills, saves natural resources, and reduces the amount of waste disposed. Even in times of lowered market returns on recyclables, there are avoided disposal costs associated with recycling. Local governments currently manage solid waste and recycling activities for their jurisdictions and, although the bill requires a new level of effort for county governments, counties currently have the authority to enhance their recycling efforts to include collection and recycling of fluorescent lights.

In the past several years, there has been increased interest by the public in the proper management of fluorescent lighting and confusion about proper disposal. If not managed properly, fluorescent lights are subject to breakage and release of mercury vapor. By providing a strategy for managing fluorescent lights, counties will aid their citizens in providing safe, convenient recycling or disposal of these potentially hazardous, mercury containing household wastes.

The Honorable Maggie L. McIntosh
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Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor House Bill 685 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-537-3304 or by e-mail at htablada@mde.state.md.us if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Horacio Tablada, Director
Land Management Administration

cc: The Honorable Dana Stein
Shari T. Wilson, Secretary
Heather Barthel, Director of Legislation and Policy
Lisa Nissley, Legislative Liaison/Environmental Justice Coordinator